UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/1994/NGO/25
15 August 1994

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-sixth session
Agenda item 6

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION AND APARTHEID, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 8 (XXIII)

Written statement submitted by the International Alliance of Women, The World Confederation of Labour and the World Federation of Trade Unions, non-governmental organizations in consultative status (category I); the American Association of Jurists, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, the Disabled People's International and the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, non-governmental organizations in consultative status (category I); and the Centre Europe-Tiers Monde, International Educational Development, the Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples, the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism and the International Falcon Movement, non-governmental organizations on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is distributed in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[9 August 1994]

Murders of leaders of the Christian community in the Islamic Republic of Iran

1. At the beginning of this year, thanks to a responsible reaction in favour of human rights, combining action with firmness, on the part of the international community, the release of Pastor Mehdi Dibaj, after nine years' imprisonment, was secured when he was on the point of being executed by the cruel mullahs in power in Iran. All the champions of human rights were deeply satisfied at having prevented a horrible crime.

2. But the joy to which this success gave rise was short-lived. A few days later, on 19 January 1994, another pastor, Hovsepian Mehr, who had been the architect of the international campaign which had led to the release of Dibaj, was abducted by the secret police of the regime of the mullahs and murdered shortly afterwards.

3. In particular, in his letter to the Council of Churches of the "Assemblies of God" dated 11 January 1994, calling for international action to save the life of Pastor Dibaj, Hovsepian Mehr wrote: "It is an established fact that our brother Mehdi Dibaj has been sentenced to death by the religious judge of the town of Sari. Dibaj has sent me the text of his death sentence, which is a clear document stating that, according to religious law, he is an apostate and must be executed ... I appreciate your decision to take positive action; and our executive board has also decided that the "keep quiet and wait and see" policy is a satanic one. If we die or are imprisoned for our faith, we want all the Christians in the world to know what happens to their brothers and sisters in a country which clains to be religious".

4. At its fiftieth session the Commission on Human Rights, outraged by all the crimes committed by the mullahs, expressed its concern, inter alia, at the violation by the Iranian regime of the rights of religious minorities, including those of Christians.

5. But the regime has so far ignored the 31 condemnatory resolutions concerning it adopted by different United Nations bodies and has clearly demonstrated that it knows no other method of ensuring its survival than that of continually violating humanitarian principles.

6. To take one instance: on 4 July 1994 the world learned that another leader of the Iranian Christian community had been murdered in Iran. The Chairman of the Protestant pastoral council, Tedhis Mikhailian, aged 62, disappeared without trace on 29 June. This abominable crime was reported when the police, while searching for Mikhailian, discovered another body - that of Pastor Dibaj.

7. In a communiqué published on 7 July last, Amnesty International confirmed that two more Christian leaders had been found dead and that others might be in danger. Portes Ouvertes, a Christian human rights organization, also reported that two other Protestant pastors had been detained in Iran and that an Iranian Christian who had returned to Iran after living for some time in the United States had disappeared.

8. The murders of the Reverend Tedhis Mikhailian and of Pastor Mehdi Dibaj and Haik Hovsepian Mehr by the secret services of the Iranian regime are elements in a wider plan for the elimination of religious minorities in Iran. According to recent reports the heads of the Christian churches, during a

meeting with the authorities of the regime, were warned that this would be the last Christmas they would celebrate in iran.

9. For centuries the Iranian peoples have lived with ethnic and religious diversity in a state of coexistence and tolerance. The presence of these minorities within Iranian society was always considered as an additional facet of the country's cultural riches. Thus the plan of the Iranian National Resistance Council, which seeks to secure complete respect for the rights of religious minorities, reflects the deep desire of the Iranian people for the recognition of complete equality of rights for all citizens of the country without any ethnic or religious discrimination whatsoever.

10. But it must regretfully be recognized that the mullahs are dreaming of the elimination of these minorities at the price of the most abominable of crimes. To they intend to put into practice the grim concept of religious cleansing ?

11. In expressing our indignation at the attitude of the Iranian regime towards religious minorities within the country we request the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities -

(a) To adopt a new resolution firmly condemning the violations of human rights committed by the Iranian regime and its recourse to State terrorism;

(b) To denounce the cowardly murders of the three leaders of the Iranian Christian community by the secret police of the regime of the mullahs;

(c) To request the High Commissioner for Human Rights to give priority to the examination of the situation in Iran and, in view of the indifference of the Iranian authorities to the concern of the international community, to take the necessary steps to bring the file on violations of human rights in that country to the attention of the United Nations Security Council.